

**SUMMARY OF THE SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ACCREDITATION CONFERENCE**

**June 26-29, 2000
Williamsburg, Virginia**

INTRODUCTION

The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) held its Sixth Annual Meeting, NELAC VI, June 26 - 29, 2000 at the Radisson Fort Magruder Inn and Conference Center in Williamsburg, VA. The meeting was co-sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of General Services, Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services. Approximately 286 individuals participated in the meeting.

The meeting opened with a plenary session in which perspectives on NELAC and the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) were reviewed. The keynote speaker was Mr. Robert E. Roberts, Executive Director of the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS). Mr. George Mills provided a report from the Accrediting Authority Review Board (AARB). Dr. Ken Jackson presented a report from the NELAP Accrediting Authority Workgroup. Open committee sessions in preparation for voting were then held, followed by plenary sessions in which committee reports on their progress and proposed revisions to the chapters of the NELAC Standard were presented to participants. During the voting session, all revisions to the chapters were adopted by the Conference as proposed in committee sessions by more than a 90% majority excepting the proposed changes to section 2.1.3 (PT Fields of Testing) and an amendment. The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) also met in conjunction with NELAC VI.

Participants received conference materials at check-in which included a detailed agenda and a bound copy of proposed changes to the NELAC Standard (dated 6/26/00). The registrant's packet also included a one-page agenda, a summary of NELAC Board members and committee chairs, information about nominees for Chair-Elect and the Board of Directors, a NELAC directory, a list of NELAC committee membership rotations, a "NELAC Needs You" committee nomination form, a list of ground rules for the meeting, a summary of voting procedures, Quality Systems proposed language for water asbestos testing, the AARB charter, a summary of decisions by NELAP accrediting authorities (AAs), proficiency testing (PT) flowchart, PT Frequently Asked Questions, a meeting evaluation form, and an announcement for the next NELAC interim meeting.

Registrants included representatives of local and county government, representatives of State and Territorial government, representatives of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Headquarters programs and Regional offices, and representatives of other Federal government organizations. In the private sector, there were representatives from environmental testing laboratories, representatives from laboratory accreditation organizations, and from industry. Other groups attending included consultants, academia, and environmental interest groups.

OPENING PLENARY SESSION

The Sixth NELAC Annual Meeting was opened by Ms. Jeanne Mourrain, NELAC Director, welcoming participants. She introduced the NELAC Board of Directors and committee chairs. Members of the Board included: Dr. James Pearson (Chair), Dr. Ken Jackson (Past Chair), Dr. Charles Brokopp (Chair-Elect), Ms. Lisa Doucet (Acting Executive Secretary), Dr. Ronald Cada, Ms. Barbara Finazzo, Dr. Paul

Kimsey, Ms. Sylvia Labie, Ms. Anne Rhyne, and Ms. Jackie Sample. She then reviewed the conference schedule and meeting procedures. Ms. Mourrain thanked Dr. Pearson and his staff from the Commonwealth of Virginia for organizing and hosting the conference.

Remarks from the Chair

Dr. Pearson welcomed participants to the Commonwealth of Virginia. He encouraged participation in the open meetings and reminded participants that there was a colonial banquet on Tuesday night. He reviewed schedule changes and told participants that lunch would be provided each day, as a courtesy of their registration fees. He then thanked the staff from Virginia, the Radisson, and RTI for their help with the meeting.

Dr. Pearson remarked that concern was raised at the Fifth Interim Meeting regarding future funding resources for NELAC. He said that the Board of Directors and Dr. Wilson Hershey, representing ELAB, met with Dr. Norine Noonan, Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of Research and Development. In that meeting, Dr. Noonan reaffirmed EPA's commitment to fund NELAC through the end of 2001 and reiterated EPA's support for continued development of NELAC. However EPA management is reviewing its organizational structure and NELAC's place in it. The NELAC Board of Directors, ELAB, and EPA will be working together to continue development of the conference (e.g., pursue funding from private nonprofit organizations). Dr. Pearson said the three bodies will also work together to address and resolve issues about Performance Based Measurement Systems (PBMS).

Keynote Address

Mr. Robert E. Roberts, Executive Director of the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), provided background about ECOS. ECOS is the national non-profit, non-partisan association of state and territorial environmental commissioners. It was established in 1993 to:

- Champion the role of states in environmental management.
- Provide for the exchange of ideas, views and experiences among states.
- Foster cooperation and coordination in environmental management.
- Articulate state positions to Congress, federal agencies and the public on environmental issues.

ECOS is classified as a 501(c)6 organization, which means that it is an incorporated nonprofit organization that can lobby. The Environmental Research Institute of the States (ERIS) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization which is incorporated, but cannot lobby. ERIS has no staff but uses staff from ECOS, on a reimbursable basis, to carry out its projects. Its focus is on educational and research issues.

Mr. Roberts reviewed ECOS's activities (information about ECOS is available at its website: <http://www.sso.org/ecos/>). He then outlined how and why an organization should set up an association.

How to set up an association? Needed are:

- Money and paper requirements (e.g., incorporation papers, federal tax ID number, accountants, auditors, bookkeepers, attorneys, and insurance).
- Office equipment (e.g., telephones, fax machines, computers..
- Policies and procedures (e.g., personnel manual).
- Start-up funding (e.g., sufficient funding to last long enough to get more funding).

Examples of sources for start-up funding are collected dues, grants and cooperative agreements, and revenue over cost-basis activities (e.g., meetings). Mr. Roberts said that most small businesses fail because they do not have sufficient funds to continue.

Why set up an association? Reasons include:

- An association can move information quickly (e.g., newsletters, list server, magazine).
- An association has the ability to lobby.
- An association, itself, will increase funding options. An association becomes self-fulfilling because it is very structured.

Mr. Roberts then entertained questions from the floor. One participant asked how many people were on ECOS's staff: Mr. Roberts responded that ECOS had 12 full-time employees and 6 summer interns. However, the association started with only two employees. Another participant asked how many states are involved in ECOS: Mr. Roberts said that 52 of the 55 states and territories are involved (one state and two territories are not involved). Another person asked how NELAC could collaborate with ECOS to further their association and foster environmental quality: Mr. Roberts said that ECOS is interested in data quality issues and that collaboration would probably start with that issue

Report from the Accrediting Authority Review Board (AARB)

Mr. George Mills delivered the first annual report from the AARB, which was appointed at NELAC V. The AARB has:

- Established standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the AA approval review process.
- Created a charter which describes the roles and responsibilities of the AARB (included in the registrant's packet).
- Reviewed the NELAC summary report of NELAP implementation which will be submitted to the Board of Directors and NELAC Director.

In their report, the AARB recommends that NELAP establish SOPs for assessment teams and develop a records retention procedure. The AARB would like records of final decisions by NELAP to be included in a summary report. NELAP should document conflict of interest issues between assessment teams and laboratories. There are also time-line issues between review and assessment of AAs which need to be resolved. The full report will be available at the AARB meeting on Wednesday, June 28, 2000.

Report from the NELAP Accrediting Authorities

Dr. Ken Jackson presented the report from the NELAP Accrediting Authorities (AAs). He described this group which meets every two weeks by teleconference to implement the NELAC Standard in the most harmonious way possible. He stressed that this is a group of accrediting authorities which have agreed to work informally together to ensure successful implementation of the NELAC Standard, and is not a NELAC committee or subcommittee. During implementation the accrediting authorities find various sections of the NELAC Standard that are unclear: the standing committees are then notified and propose clarifications. At other times the group has felt the standard should be changed and made recommendations to the standing committees. Dr. Jackson said that the NELAP Accrediting Authorities intend to give a presentation at every interim and annual meeting of NELAC.

A summary of decisions by the NELAP Accrediting Authorities was included in the registrant's packet. Dr. Jackson directed attention to some of the recent issues such as hazardous waste PT samples (2/8/00), policy on primary and secondary AAs (2/22/00), and potential loopholes in the Quality Systems chapter (3/7/00). Additional issues included: consideration of a maximum time limit for completion of corrective actions that result from an on-site assessment, how long after primary accreditation a laboratory has to acquire secondary accreditation, accreditation by preparation/clean-up methods rather than as part of the overall test method, and assessor training requirements and deadlines as an AA responsibility.

Dr. Jackson stated that the tentative time frame for announcing the first round of accredited laboratories has been extended to January 2001, based on a recommendation from the NELAP Accrediting Authorities and the PT Committee. This is primarily due to PT sample scarcity. The list of analytes for hazardous waste proficiency testing has not been available long enough for laboratories to complete the requisite two samples.

An updated version of the Summary of Decisions will soon be available on the NELAC website.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Jackson said that the AAs do not to expect implementation to be completely smooth or completely rough. By working together, the AAs intend to accredit laboratories in a consistent way in compliance with the NELAC Standard by January 2001.

COMMITTEE WORKING SESSIONS

For two days following the opening plenary session, concurrent working sessions involving all 13 standing, administrative, and *ad hoc* committees were held. Progress made by each committee, as well as principal unresolved issues (and time frames for addressing them, if defined) are listed below. In keeping with the goals established for the meeting, all working sessions were of an open-forum format; a session typically included committee members, Federal and State representatives, as well as representatives from laboratories, accrediting organizations, industry and the general public. A handout of changes proposed during NELAC VI was made available to participants prior to the voting session.

Program Policy & Structure — Chair: Ms. Marcia Davies

Highlights for the committee included new language about the AARB, discussions about the Federal AAs (the committee proposes that the Federal AAs be primary and secondary AAs only for Federal laboratories, not private-sector laboratories), and scope of accreditation issues.

One of the committee's unresolved issues is participation of Native American Tribes in NELAC. Currently, tribal coordinators from EPA Regions are working with the Tribes on this (Region 2 has the lead). Another issue is scope of accreditation. The committee will continue to work with the Regulatory Coordination and Proficiency Testing Committees to resolve this by the next interim meeting (NELAC VII). Proposed changes to Section 1.1.2 have been withdrawn so that the committee can re-examine unresolved issues. They hope to resolve this by NELAC VII.

The committee plans to participate in the effort to examine the formation of a NELAC non-profit organization. By NELAC VII, they will try to determine whether to include in the NELAC Standard policies made by the Board of Directors and decisions of the AAs. The committee's voting agenda consisted primarily of changes to the glossary.

Joint Session on Scope of Accreditation

During the Joint Session on Scope of Accreditation, in which the Program Policy & Structure, the Proficiency Testing, and the Regulatory Coordination committees participated, three major options for scope of accreditation were considered:

- matrix/method
- matrix/method/analyte; analyte class
- program/method/analyte

The second option was overwhelmingly favored during a straw vote in the joint session.

Proficiency Testing — Chair: Ms. Barbara Burmeister

After much discussion in the special joint session, the PT committee proposed in Section 2.1.3 that PT Fields of Testing (FOT) be changed from “program-matrix-analyte” to “program-matrix-method-analyte” to be more consistent with the current scope of accreditation in Chapter 1. The committee plans to work with the Program Policy, and Structure Committee to further define the PT FOT by NELAC VII. Other proposed changes occur in Sections 2.2, 2.2.2, 2.3.1, and D.0. In addition, Appendices G (Radiochemistry) and H (Air) have been completed and will be presented for vote during this meeting. Ms. Burmeister said that AAs and laboratories should be aware that implementation of proficiency testing for air samples cannot occur until the Field Activities chapter is final.

Ms. Burmeister said that states need PT data from providers in a consistent format. To resolve this and other issues about PT data, the committee will form a working group of PT providers, AAs, and laboratories. The subcommittee will be lead by Mr. Larry Jackson.

On-site Assessment — Chair: Mr. William Ingersoll

Committee highlights include a new Section 3.4.1.2 (Technical Support Personnel) which provides a mechanism for including a technical expert in the assessment team and completion of the pilot NELAC Basic Assessor Training.

The committee plans to take action on the following unresolved issues by 10/15/00:

- Section 3.3.3, clarify process for notification by laboratories of changes in laboratory capabilities (consult with Chapters 4 & 5).
- Section 3.3.3, define evaluation criteria for AAs to assess changes in laboratory capabilities (consult with Chapters 4 & 5).
- Section 3.6.3, clarify language associated with "standardized checklists" (quality systems checklist from Chapter 5 or discipline-specific technical checklists).
- Sections 3.4.3 and 3.4.4, better define information collection and review for Secondary AAs (consult with Chapter 6).
- Section 3.5.1, review the need for specifying the assessment duration and number of assessors.
- Section 3.5.5, resolve the process for contesting identified deficiencies.
- Section 3.7.2, clarify "Documentation of Existing Conditions" for inclusion in assessment report. The initial intent was to describe the physical facilities but the committee needs to reexamine this language and perhaps expand it.
- Section 3.7.2, require assessment reports to identify the specific areas within the laboratory where deficiencies are cited.

The committee has reached consensus regarding the development of training criteria rather than training courses. They plan to develop standards for basic assessor training by 10/15/00. A subcommittee will work with materials from the pilot basic assessor training and will be led by Dr. Ken Jackson. The committee plans to develop standards for technical assessment training by 4/1/01. They will set criteria for the courses (training vendors will actually develop the course). The committee also plans to coordinate with the Quality Systems committee in order to update the quality systems checklist.

Other future plans include the development of a process to communicate clarifications and explanations of the NELAC Standard. The committee is considering some type of forum for assessors to discuss how they are implementing the standards and to ensure consistent implementation.

Accreditation Process — Chair: Dr. John Griggs (presentation by Mr. Gleason Wheatley)

Substantive issues for the committee included noncontiguous laboratories, mobile laboratories, and due process. The committee has eliminated the word “auxiliary” from the chapter and will leave it to the Primary AAs to determine noncontiguous laboratories. Mobile laboratories operating outside of their home state will need separate accreditation. The issue with due process is that every state implements it differently. Designated representatives will need to contact their Primary AA to give them “heads up” regarding due process. Mr. Wheatley said that new issues may be encountered, but the committee considered most issues settled by the end of their open session.

The committee plans to maintain awareness of the Field Activities Committee and the ELAB subgroup concerned with Source Emission Monitoring deliberations. However, the Accreditation Process Committee sees itself at the end of the process.

Quality Systems — Chair: Mr. Joe Slayton

Mr. Slayton announced that the committee’s new chair is Mr. Scott Siders. Committee highlights include:

- D.5 Air Testing. Assessments are based on D.1 Chemical Testing because there is currently no standard for air testing. The committee has limited the scope to samples submitted to a laboratory. To resolve the issue of laboratory activities versus field measurements, a workgroup has been formed.
- D.4 Radiochemical Testing. Minor changes to proposed language were needed. A workgroup has been formed to improve “auditability” and clarify language.
- D.2 Toxicity Testing. Few changes to proposed language were needed. In response to comments from VA, NJ, and CA, the committee has expanded the scope.
- D.3 Microbiology Testing. Primary concerns are for small laboratories and Safe Drinking Water Act requirements. Certification officers expressed a need for more requirements, but many microbiologists believe the committee added the wrong types of requirements and too many of them. In response to discussion during the working session, the committee has modified the language.
- Section 5.12 Records. Arguments were made that legal chains of custody are rarely needed and are very case specific, that better standards are available (e.g., ASTM D 4840-95), that chemists are not legal experts, and it is too easily misunderstood or misused. As a result of the discussions, the committee has eliminated Appendix E and replaced it with a requirement that a laboratory must have written procedures in place for evidentiary records.
- Sections 5.1-5.15 and D.1. Small, but significant changes have been made due to feedback from AAs.
- Glossary changes (e.g., sample tracking, chain of custody form, legal chain of custody protocols, LCS, detection limit, quantitation limit, statistical minimum significant difference).

Future plans are to stay with the high-priority issues, such as AA implementation issues and needs. The committee plans to take action by NELAC VII on the following: ISO 17025, microbiology testing, laboratory and field quality system requirements (working with Field Activities Committee), comment response, asbestos testing (new appendix). Mr. Slayton requested that comments be sent electronically.

Accrediting Authority — Chair: Mr. John Anderson

Mr. Anderson said that the committee had good discussion and fine tuning of committee proposals. Highlights included an ongoing review process for the operation of NELAP and development of a framework for AARBs to use in carrying out the review process (using ISO Guides). A subcommittee is being formed to determine applicability of appropriate ISO Guides to the audit/review of NELAP. They

plan to have a draft of the framework by 10/1/00. Mr. Anderson stressed the importance of a consistent application/implementation of the NELAC Standard among all the AAs.

Future plans include a general review of Chapter 6 (by 10/1/00). The committee is looking for places where the standard can be fine-tuned or improved. Mr. Anderson noted that the committee has developed a standard format for submitting comments to them.

The committee is proposing changes to the following sections of Chapter 6:

- Section 6.1 Introduction. Editorial changes only.
- Sections 6.2.1(h) and 6.2.2. Prohibits federal agencies from accrediting private laboratories. This prohibition was requested by federal agencies and was a resource issue.
- Section 6.3.3.1.2. New section proposed by AA Workgroup that allows AAs to decide among themselves which AA will carry out primary review of applicant laboratory if multiple AAs are needed.
- Section 6.3.3.1.4. New section, clarifying 6.3.3.1.2, requires written agreement between AAs.
- Section 6.4.2(c). Revision of existing section to protect an AA's records and files from review (where confidentiality is important). The committee is expecting a proposed amendment from the Department of Defense to include national security issues.
- Section 6.5. The committee is removing the sunset clause to the provision. They propose that any AA has two years to get their rules and regulations in order after becoming a NELAP AA.

Field Activities — Chair: Mr. Dan Bivins

Mr. Bivins said that most people agree that ISO 17025 is a good starting point for Chapter 7. There is a need for a careful balance between the level of specificity and the general nature of a 17025-based field standard. He also said that the qualifications of assessors for a field air standard are extremely important. Dual roles are in question. The general sampling standard (Section 7.1) is for all media, but there may be a need for additional standards.

Whether a field activities standard can be stand-alone or self-contained is an unresolved issue. The committee plans to take action on this by November, 2000. They will work with their subcommittee and the ELAB subcommittee to determine how to demonstrate capability of a company with an ISO 17025 type field standard (by 11/00). Mr. Bivins said that 17025 style notes are wanted in the field standard, but the committee is unsure if that is allowed by NELAC policy (action by 7/00). There is also a copyright problem with ISO. The committee will pull sections that have been "copied" from ISO from the vote and the committee will try to address the copyright issue.

Future plans include posting results from a "need" survey conducted by California EPA on the NELAC website (by 7/00). A subcommittee for an air field standard will attend the ELAB subcommittee meetings and provide progress updates to be reviewed by the standing committee (7/00 - 9/00). The committee will also keep unresolved issues on their agenda (action by 11/00). Mr. Bivins stated that there will be at least one vacancy in committee membership in the next year and encouraged someone with air testing experience to apply.

Regulatory Coordination — Chair: Dr. Michael Miller

Highlights of the committee are the NELAC Scope of Accreditation/ Fields of Testing and the impact of new Department of Transportation rules for transporting infectious waste on microbiology laboratories. Dr. Miller also announced that the new committee chair will be Mr. Carl Kircher.

Resolution of issues on Scope of Accreditation/Fields of Testing will be ongoing. The Regulatory Coordination Committee took the lead on this issue initially, but now the Program Policy and Structure and Proficiency Testing Committees need to iron out the details. Dr. Miller said that it needs to be agreeable to all EPA Programs and must be consistent across all chapters of the NELAC Standard. He said that NELAC needs the cooperation of EPA programs, especially water, which was not present in great strength at this meeting. The National Database is a key ongoing issue and the committee will work to ensure that NELAP's needs are met.

The committee will work with the other NELAC standing committees to develop a proposal for scope of accreditation by NELAC VII (for vote at NELAC VII). They will assess and report on the EPA regulatory agenda (4/00 and 10/00, reviewed by NELAC VII). They will also post examples of state regulations adopting NELAC (by NELAC VII).

Membership and Outreach — Chair: Dr. Irene Ronning

Ms. Marge Prevost and Ms. Sherry Clay have been elected new co-chairs of the committee. Dr. Ronning said that the committee has had severe membership problems. Because of this, and to maintain committee experience and history, the committee has received a waiver from the NELAC Board of Directors for some members to serve additional terms.

Highlights of the committee include a policy for determining members of the House of Representatives. The policy will streamline the process and decrease the number of letters to governors. It will be recommended to the NELAC Board for adoption. Recommendations have been given to EPA to increase user-friendliness of the NELAC website. Dr. Ronning reminded participants that since EPA owns the NELAC website, the committee can only make recommendations. At times, those recommendations are not adopted for regulatory or cost reasons. Dr. Ronning also said that the committee needs to review their mission (re-examine and clarify the role of the committee).

The committee proposed changing the wording in the Bylaws Article VI, Section 2A and in Chapter 1, Section 1.6.5.2. These changes will affect the Regulatory Coordination Committee. The two committees need to agree on this prior to proposing language to the Program Policy and Structure Committee (by NELAC VII). Presentation materials have been placed in the committee "parking lot." Two out of six PowerPoint presentations are almost ready to be posted on the website. Most of the material has been donated by Mr. Chuck Wibby and Mr. Jerry Parr and can be used, not as a self-tutorial, but by individuals who want to give presentations about NELAC. The committee will continue to review and revise the presentations (clean up logos, etc.) during future teleconferences. The committee also intends to draft a form letter to address applicants who fill out nomination forms.

Future plans include a proposal to the Program Policy and Structure Committee with changes to the Bylaws Article II, Section 2 (evidence of voting membership or "policy of dots"), a recommendation to the NELAC Board for a policy on recruitment of committee members, a proposal regarding interaction between the Membership and Outreach Committee and other standing committees (developed by Don Zahniser to be discussed at NELAC VII), review of the introductory information on the website to assure accuracy, recommendations to add links to the website for members of the House of Representatives and Accrediting Authorities, and recommendation for a NELAC website map.

Nominating — Chair: Dr. Kenneth Jackson

Nominees for the NELAC Board of Directors (members at-large) are Mr. Joe Slayton, from the U.S. EPA Region III Laboratory, and Ms. Ann Marie Allen, from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The nominee for chair-elect is Ms. Sylvia "Silky" Labie, from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The new chair is Dr. Charles Brokopp, from the Utah Department of Health.

National Database — Chair: Mr. Matthew Caruso

Mr. Caruso said that the national database is currently in Phase 3—Development, Testing, and Deployment. Software is being developed based on the 1999 Fields of Testing definition. Specifications for AA data file uploads will be released and user interface testing will begin within a month. The final format of the Scope of Accreditation/Fields of Testing is unresolved. The format is dependent on the decisions made by NELAC for its standard. The committee will continue to work with EPA and its database contractor to produce a functional database by January, 2001.

Transition — Co-chairs: Ms. Carol Batterton and Dr. Charles Brokopp

Ms. Batterton said that meeting participants indicated a continued need for the Transition Committee with an expanded membership. A substantive issue will be the identification of potential partners for developing a non-profit organization. The committee also wants to assure that decisions made by the NELAP Accrediting Authorities are promptly shared with interested parties.

Unresolved issues include clarification of EPA's role in the ongoing operation of NELAC, the restructuring of NELAC as a non-profit organization, communication of deadlines and other requirements that laboratories must meet to obtain accreditation by January 2001 (from NELAP Accrediting Authorities), and scheduling of secondary accreditation of laboratories.

The Transition Committee will continue as an *ad hoc* committee. They plan to expand the committee to include representatives from Program Policy and Structure, and appropriate federal agencies, state agencies, and contributors (by 7/00). The committee will propose (by 10/00) a preliminary plan of action for transitioning NELAC to a non-profit organization. They will encourage AAs to look for innovative ways to deal with Fields of Testing issues until changes in the NELAC Standard can be made for final resolution. Ms. Batterton asked the AAs to exercise flexibility where possible to facilitate reciprocity. The committee will also continue to encourage and advocate EPA becoming a NELAP Accrediting Authority so that EPA can accredit state laboratories to the NELAC Standard, when necessary.

CLOSING PLENARY SESSION

Dr. Jim Pearson thanked the Board of Directors, especially Ms. Barbara Finazzo, Dr. Ken Jackson, and Dr. Ronald Cada, who are rotating off the Board. He thanked the committees, the hotel staff (especially Mr. Crayton Smith, General Manager, Ms. Harriet Harris, Director of Group Sales, and Ms. Gail Reese, Catering and Sales Coordinator), Dr. Gene Tatsch and the RTI staff. The MacGruder Hotel Cannon Award was presented to select hotel staff for their exemplary job performance during this meeting. Special thanks went to Ms. Jeanne Hankins for all she has done for NELAC. Dr. Pearson said that NELAC would not be where it is today without her.

Ms. Nancy Wentworth recognized the staff from the Commonwealth of Virginia and presented Quality Awards to key personnel: Ms. Becky Purdue, Ms. Alicia Ordon, and Ms. Eileen Sanders. To recognize significant contributions, Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to: members of the On-site Assessment Committee, Mr. Mike Ciolek (NELAC webmaster), and Ms. Lisa Doucet (Acting Executive Secretary). Dr. Ken Jackson, who has been with NELAC since before its inception, was awarded a special plaque from EPA for devoting his career to improving the quality of environmental laboratories and for his unfailing support and furtherance of NELAC. Ms. Marlene Moore was given an award from the NELAC Board of Directors for her key support and contribution to NELAC, especially for development and presentation of pilot NELAC basic assessor training in March 2000. Another award from the Board of Directors was given to Mr. Chuck Wibby and Mr. Jerry Parr in recognition of their comprehensive, well-balanced, and informative seminars.

VOTING SESSION

Dr. Pearson opened the voting session by introducing Ms. Lisa Doucet, NELAC Acting Executive Secretary, who reviewed the voting process, and the parliamentarian, Ms. Helen Anderson. Dr. Ken Jackson, chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that the committee submitted the following nominations: Ms. Sylvia Labie (Chair-Elect), Mr. Joe Slayton (USEPA, Region 3) and Ms. Ann Marie Allen (Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection) as at-large members of the NELAC Board of Directors. He moved that they be elected by acclamation, which they were.

From the floor, Dr. Jackson moved that all discussion be limited to two minutes per person per issue. Following a second, the motion was passed with five dissenting votes. Ms. Jeanne Hankins was appointed timekeeper.

Dr. Pearson then opened the voting session. Proposed changes to the chapters of the NELAC Standard that had been submitted prior to June 26, 2000 were reviewed during the committee sessions and, in some cases, amended. The remaining text, as well as amended wording, was submitted for vote. All votes were by a show of hands, and were recorded in accordance with the NELAC Standard (Bylaws, Article VII, Section 3). The voting issues are summarized below: the detailed voting record follows as an attachment.

Constitution and Bylaws

No changes were proposed by the Program Policy and Structure Committee

Chapter 1 – Program Policy and Structure

Dr. Marcia Davies, chair of the committee, reviewed the changes being proposed by the committee. She noted that the changes to the glossary primarily remove terms not used in the NELAC Standard. She then moved adoption of the proposed changes. Dr. Pearson then called for the vote.

- Issue 1:** All changes proposed to Chapter One of the NELAC Standard, including the revised glossary.
This issue passed.

Chapter 2 – Proficiency Testing

Ms. Barbara Burmeister, chair of the committee, reviewed the changes being proposed by the committee. She noted that the committee considers the second paragraph of section 2.3.1 superfluous and proposes its deletion. She then moved adoption of the proposed changes. In response to discussion, she agreed to submit section 2.1.3 for voting as an individual item (Bylaws, Article VII, Section 3, D). Dr. Pearson then called for the vote.

- Issue 2:** All changes proposed to Chapter Two of the NELAC Standard, including Appendices A-H; excluding section 2.1.3.
This issue passed.

Ms. Burmeister then moved adoption of section 2.1.3 (PT Fields of Testing) and an extensive discussion ensued. A proposal to retain the “Note” was overwhelmingly supported by an informal show of hands. Dr. Pearson then called for the vote.

- Issue 3:** Changes proposed to section 2.1.3 (excluding consideration of the added Note).
This issue failed.

Chapter 3 – On-site Assessment

Mr. Bill Ingersol, chair of the committee, reviewed the changes being proposed by the committee and moved adoption of the proposed changes. Following discussion, Dr. Pearson called for the vote.

Issue 4: All changes proposed to Chapter Three of the NELAC Standard.
This issue passed.

Chapter 4 – Accreditation Process

In the absence of Mr. John Griggs, chair of the committee, Mr. Gleason Wheatley reviewed the changes being proposed by the committee to section 4.0 and moved adoption of the proposed changes. An amendment to modify this section was moved and seconded; following discussion, Dr. Pearson called for the vote.

Issue 5: (amendment): in 4.0(a), 4.0(b) and to delete 4.0(c)
This issue failed.

Wording was then then proposed for a new section 4.0(f): following an informal show of hands, this proposal was withdrawn.

It was then proposed that 4.0(c) be deleted: following an informal show of hands, this proposal was withdrawn.

Dr. Pearson then called for the vote on adoption of the changes initially proposed to section 4.0.

Issue 6: All changes proposed to section 4.0.
This issue passed

Mr. Wheatley then reviewed the committee's proposal for adoption of the balance of the chapter, noting an additional editorial change in section 4.1.1.2 and moved adoption of the proposed changes. Following discussion Dr. Pearson called for the vote.

Issue 7: Adoption of the balance of changes proposed for chapter 4.
This issue passed.

Chapter 5 – Quality Systems

Mr. Joe Slayton, chair of the committee, reviewed the changes to section D.5 (Air Testing) being proposed by the committee. He then moved adoption of the proposed changes. A proposal to delete the proposed language was withdrawn after an informal show of hands. Following discussion Dr. Pearson called for the vote.

Issue 8: Adoption of changes proposed to section D.5 (Air Testing).
This issue passed.

Mr. Slayton reviewed the changes to section D.4 (Radiochemical Testing) being proposed by the committee and moved adoption of the proposed changes. Following discussion Dr. Pearson called for the vote.

Issue 9: Adoption of changes proposed to section D.4 (Radiochemical Testing).
This issue passed.

Mr. Slayton reviewed the changes to section D.3 (Microbiology Testing) being proposed by the committee and moved adoption of the proposed changes. A recommendation from the floor to add the phrase "... *except for self-contained chromofluorogenic methods* ..." in sections D.3.1.a.3 and D.3.1.b.1 was accepted on a show of hands. Following discussion Dr. Pearson called for the vote.

Issue 10: Adoption of amended changes proposed to D.3 (Microbiology Testing).
This issue passed.

Mr. Slayton reviewed the changes to section D.2 (Toxicity Testing) being proposed by the committee and moved adoption of the proposed changes. Following discussion Dr. Pearson called for the vote.

Issue 11: Adoption of changes proposed to D.2 (Toxicity Testing)
This issue passed.

Mr. Slayton reviewed the changes to section 5.8 being proposed by the committee and moved adoption of the proposed changes. During discussion, Dr. Pearson referred section 5.8d back to the committee and removed it from voting consideration. At the conclusion of discussion Dr. Pearson called for the vote.

Issue 12: Adoption of changes proposed to section 5.8, excluding section 5.8d.
The issue passed.

Mr. Slayton reviewed the changes to sections 5.1 - 5.7, 5.9-5.15, Appendices D.1 and E being proposed by the committee and moved adoption of the proposed changes. Following discussion Dr. Pearson called for the vote.

Issue 13: Adoption of changes proposed to sections 5.1 - 5.7, 5.9-5.15, Appendices D.1 and E
The issue passed.

Chapter 6 – Accrediting Authority

Mr. John Anderson, chair of the committee, reviewed the changes being proposed by the committee. He noted that changes proposed for section 6.1 are editorial. He then moved adoption of the proposed changes to section 6.2.1 and following. During discussion, a request was made from the floor, and accepted by Mr. Anderson, to add following wording, to section 6.4.2.1:

NELAP assessment teams performing an on-site assessment of a Federal agency may need security clearances, appropriate badging, and/or a security briefing before proceeding with the on-site assessment. Assessors shall be informed in writing of any information that is controlled for national security reasons and cannot be released to the public.

Dr. Pearson then called for the vote.

Issue 15: Adoption of changes proposed to section 6.2.1 and following, as amended above.
The issue passed.

Chapter 7 – Field Activities

The committee withdrew this new chapter from vote at this meeting.

This concluded the voting session. Dr. Pearson thanked the conferees for their participation and adjourned the Sixth NELAC Annual Meeting.